include reduction in cost by improving the techno-economic parameters, demand oriented production, improving quality of products, and increasing sales through aggressive and customer oriented marketing, etc.

Amendments of Certain Mines Act

119. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering amendments in the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and Minerals Concessions Rules 1960 particularly with a view to delegating more powers to State Governments; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard and by when amendments are likely to be made?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) yes, Sir.

(b) The Central Government constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Mines, Government of India with Mining Secretaries of States Governments of Orissa, Rajasthan, karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Assam and Himachal Pradesh, Secretary General, Federation of Indian Mineral Industries and Controller General, Indian Bureau of Mines etc. as Members. The terms of reference of the Committee, inter-alia, included review of the existing laws and procedures governing regulation and development of minerals and to recommend steps to make them compatible with the policy changes and to suggests steps to reduce delays in grant\renewal of Prospecting Licences\Mining Leases. The Committee was also to consider and suggest further delegation of powers to the State Governments regarding grant\renewal of Prospecting Licences\Mining Leases and measures to be taken to prevent illegal mining. The Committee has submitted its report to the Government and further necessary action has already been initiated.

देश में इस्पात की मांग

120. **श्री चीमनभाई हरीभाई शुक्ल: क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:**

(क) क्या सरकार ने सन् 2001-02 तक देश में इस्पात की मांग का राज्यवार आकलन किया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौर क्या है;

(ग) क्या सरकार ने इस मांग को पूरा करने के लिए कोई प्रयास किया है;

(घ) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ङ) इस समय इस्पात की कुल उत्पादन क्षमता कितनी है तथा कुल कितनी मात्रा के इस्पात के लिए लाइसेंस जारी किये गये हैं?

इस्पात तथा खान मंत्री (श्री नवीन पटनायक): (क) से (घ) परिसज्जित (कार्बन) इस्पात की मांग के अनुमान अखिल भारतीय स्तर पर तैयार किए जाते हैं न कि अलग-अलग राज्यों के आधार पर। पिछले कुछ वर्षों में परिसज्जित (कार्बन) इस्पात का उत्पादन इस मांग को पूरा करने के लिए पर्याप्त रहा है, जिसका ब्यौर निम्न प्रकार है:—

(मात्रा: लाख टन में)

वर्ष	मांग	उत्पादन
1995-96	21.29	214.0
1996-97	22.12	227.2
1997-98	22.63	233.7

नौवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के लिए लोहा और इस्पात संबंधी कार्यकारी दल ने अनुमान लगाया है कि 2001-02 तक देश में परिसज्जित कार्बन इस्पात की मांग 326.8 लाख टन (निवल) हो जाने की संभावना है।

इस समय इस्पात की अधिकांश मदों की कोई कमी नहीं है। सभी राज्यों में इस्पात की आपूर्ति/उपलब्धता पर्याप्त रही है। मात्रा और गुणवत्ता दोनों ही दृष्टिकोणों से घरेलू उपलब्धता को बढ़ाने के लिए इस्पात की सभी मदों का स्वतंत्र रूप से नीति के अनुसार आयात करने की अनुमति है। तथापि, भारतीय इस्पात उत्पादक घरेलू उपभोक्ताओं की आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करने के लिए निरंतर प्रयास कर रहे हैं, जिसमें प्रौद्योगिकी का उन्नयन, उत्पादकता और उत्पादन में सुधार, उत्पादों की गुणवत्ता में सुधार तथा उपभोक्ताओं की आवश्यकता के अनुरूप उत्पाद-मिश्र को अपनाना शामिल है।

(ङ) जुलाई, 1991 से लागू नई औद्योगिक नीति के तहत इस्पात उद्योग कतिपय स्थान संबंधी प्रतिबंधों को छोड़कर औद्योगिक लाइसेंस लेने से मुक्त है। देश में अपरिष्कृत इस्पात की कुल संस्थापित क्षमता 1997-98 के दौरान अनन्तिम तौर पर लगाए गए अनुमान के अनुसार

328.8 लाख टन रही है। 1997-98 के दौरान अपरिष्कृत इस्पात की उत्पादित मात्रा 247.1 लाख टन थी।

Shortfall in Steel output

121. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that steel output has fallen;

(b) the specific reasons that can be attributed for this shortfall;

(c) whether demand for steel in the country is going up; and

(d) the manner in which Government propose to meet the demand for steel in future?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATANIK): (a) No, Sir. Finished (carbon) steel production in 1997-98 has increased marginally by 2.8% as compared to 1996-97.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) The demand for finished (carbon) steel and percentage increase in the last 3 years has been as follows:—

(Qty. in million tonnes)

Year	Demand	%increase over previous year
1995-96	21.29	14.09%
1996-97	22.12	3.89%
1997-98	22.63	2.30%

(d) At present, there is no shortage of most items of steel. Producers of steel are constantly orienting their product-mix to meet the market needs. Modernisation and expansion of steel plants of SAIL has been taken up towards this objective. Since 1991, Govt. has adopted various policy measures to encourage creation of additional steel production capacities in the private sector. To supplement domestic availability both in terms of quantity and quality, import of all items of steel is freely allowed as per policy.

Huge losses by SAIL

122. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether SAIL has incurred huge losses during the last year and so far during the current year, if so, the amount of loss incurred;

(b) the reasons for the losses; and

(c) the measures Government have taken/ propose to take to cut down losses?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) had earned a Net Profit (before tax) of about Rs. 149 crores in the year 1997-98. However, in the first half of current year SAIL has incurred a loss of about Rs. 617 crores.

(b) The main reasons for decline in profits in SAIL include show down in demand for steel, greater competition from imports, and enhancement in supplies in domestic market etc. Further, the profits were adversely affected due to increase in input prices and higher interest cost which could not be fully neutralised by better techno-economic parameters, cost reduction measures and increase in the prices of steel, etc.

(c) Government has taken following steps to improve the profitability of steel industry and to overcome the present problems:—

(i) To boost the demand and consumption of steel, the Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel (DCI&S) has launched a National Campaign for increasing the demand for steel, especially in non-traditional sectors, such as, rural and agro based industrial sector.

(ii) To reduce input costs for steel making, the special import duty on several inputs such as coking coal (ash content 12%), non-coking coal (ash content <12%), metallurgical coke, ferro nickel, charge nickel and nickel and nickel oxide sinters, low silica limestone and graphite electrodes (>28") has recently been waived.

(iii) Anti-dumping duty on Hot Rolled coils imported from Ukraine and Russia has recently been recommended. Steps are being taken for Strengthening of anti dumping investigative machinery.

(iv) Rationalisation of Duty Entitlement Pass book (DEPB) rates for steel exports have been carried out to boost exports.